

Carmen Mims Noel

Dr. Jennifer Eisenhauer

OSU Art Education 7200

21 April 2013

Reflective Practice Portfolio

Introduction

As the Master's in Art Education program at The Ohio State University comes to a close, I am fortunate to be teaching at the first charter high school in middle Tennessee and at the same school where I began my teaching career four years ago as well as in a community education setting at a local art college. LEAD Academy is a Title One, urban school that serves a low-income population with the mission of sending 100% of students to a four-year college. It was because of the high expectations and support at LEAD Academy that I decided to apply to the masters program at The Ohio State University two years ago. The decision to pursue a Master's degree in Art Education as I started my third year of teaching was intentional. I applied knowing I wanted to teach in a traditional classroom setting both during and after the program, however, I also applied to The Ohio State University's Master's in Art Education program knowing the concepts and skills I learned could eventually translate into a career in community art education. In rereading my application, I noted many of my plans and goals remain the same, but what has changed as a result of The Ohio State University's Master's in Art Education is my approach to reaching those goals and developing those plans. My process as a traditional classroom art teacher as well as a community education artist teacher has been altered for the better as a result of my

learning in courses like Dr. Walker's *Teaching Meaning in Artmaking* and Dr. Eisenhower's *Designing a Meaningful Art Curriculum*. The essays to follow on these two courses respectively will delve into more detail about how the Art Education program at The Ohio State University has influenced me in many significant ways both personally and professionally.

Carmen Mims Noel

Dr. Sydney Walker

OSU Art Education 7200

21 April 2013

Reflective Practice Essay #1 on OSU Art Education Course 604 The Artmaking Process

Essay One Introduction:

The Artmaking Process course taught by Dr. Sydney Walker as part of The Ohio State Masters in Art Education curriculum was groundbreaking for my practice as a new art teacher. From the opening quote, "We are meaning-makers, not just image makers" by Kirk Varnedoe to the stop motion videos produced by my students as a result of the course and every activity in between, the course made me a believer in the Big Ideas approach. The Artmaking Process course reinforced concepts from the Art Education 700 summer course, Issues in Artmaking and ultimately helped in becoming more confident about how to use Big Ideas in my courses. During the Artmaking Process course, Dr. Walker challenged us to engage with ideas through our own artmaking, develop a series of artworks exploring a self-selected Big Idea, and to reflect on this new way of approaching artmaking. The course was enhanced by also learning about the processes of professional artists like Pepón Osorio, Shirin Neshat, and my personal favorite Sandy Skoglund.

At the end of the course, I entered winter break excited not only about my personal shift in approaching artmaking as a result of the course, but in how I would implement new ideas about using artmaking as a meaning-filled practice into my classroom, about how I could design units so my students could make stronger

connections to the world, and about how I could continue to infuse contemporary artists into the curriculum. This learning and enthusiasm that the Artmaking Process course fostered led to key growth in five major areas- my personal beliefs as an art educator and artist, lesson and unit planning, teaching practices, student work, and the classroom environment.

Section 1: Beliefs and Values

The Artmaking Process course presented new ideas that made me consider my personal beliefs and values related to both making art and teaching art. In the very first week of the course reading *Teaching Meaning in Artmaking* by Dr. Sydney Walker, I was introduced to new concepts like purposeful play, risk taking, experimentation, and delayed meaning making in art. These concepts challenged me to confront my personal artmaking practices from college where I spent more time thinking and less time making. Because my own artmaking was rooted in this way of working, I knew my lessons and units were also asking students to develop meaning before starting a piece instead of experimenting, taking risks, and using art as purposeful play.

Comment [SW1]: To me these are some of the most important concepts about artmaking in the text.

Comment [SW2]: Good insight.

One way my beliefs and values changed upon considering the concepts in *Teaching Meaning in Artmaking* Chapter 7 was to stop spending so much time planning every detail of an art piece and how it connected to the overall meaning and to start experimenting. My thinking changed upon reading more about Sandy Skoglund's process on pages 116-123, especially her response when asked if her work had specific meaning, "I think that's like setting up the artists as knowing more than the public, and

personally that's not my philosophy" (Walker, 123). Because Skoglund is an artist I admired for a long time, the quote had an immediate impact on my thinking.

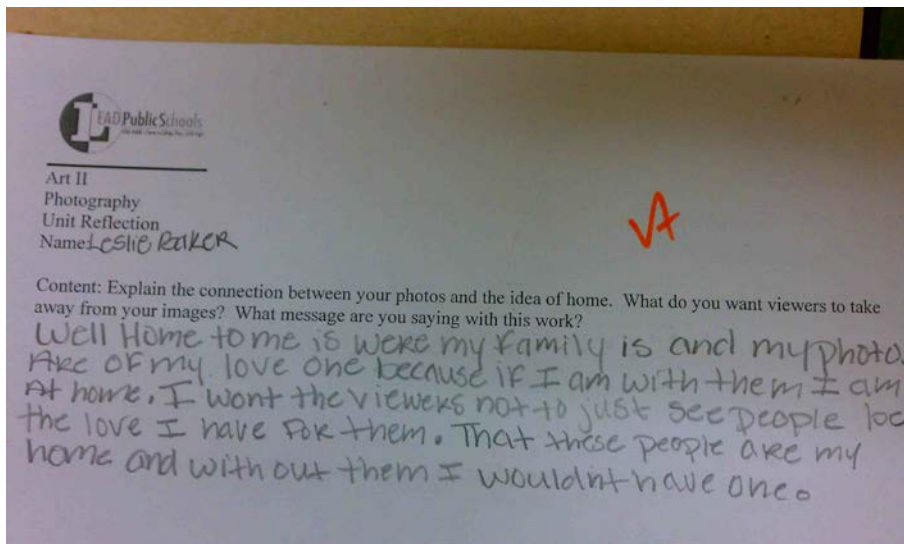
Instead of overthinking the signs of meaning section of assignment two, I was inspired by Skoglund to dive right into searching through my house things I could connect to my big idea of idealism. I considered subtopics and key concepts related to idealism beforehand, but did not have any preconceived notions about what I would take photos of or what I would explore in my later **artmaking**. I abandoned the practice of planning out my artmaking and trying to tell the audience what I wanted to say and took more risks by experimenting and questioning along the way instead of beforehand.

Comment [SW3]: This was a very important step.

Some problems I ran into with these new beliefs and values about artmaking involving risks and delayed meaning making related less to my own practice and more to my teaching. I feared that my students would not take artwork serious if it didn't have meaning up front and that exploratory artmaking would abandon the technical basics of art that many of my students had already missed at the elementary level and that this way of working would put them farther behind.

Despite my fears about how implementing some new ideas like experimentation and postponement of meaning, I gave it a try in small ways. During the Artmaking Process course in week one, I posted about the painting unit my Art I (focus group B) students were working on where they had to include a reference one of the five senses as well as a foreground, middle ground, and background and both physical and visual texture. The paintings were not originally going to use physical texture, but it was an area I thought would encourage experimentation as we discussed on Carmen after reading *Teaching Meaning in Artmaking* Chapter 7. Students' experimentation with

texture ranged from adding hot glue to the canvas to popsicle sticks to earrings to even broken headphones. I also added a component to the project where students took a quiz on which basic element (earth, wind, water, or fire) their personality best related to and incorporate that into the piece as well. This new component made it so students had to think about the meaning of their basic element as they went since the paintings had already started. The addition of experimentation with physical texture and delayed meaning making conquered by fears about student engagement and overall aesthetics and technical artmaking. In fact, the paintings were so successful that students were able to share them with the community during Nashville's monthly Hillsboro Village Artwalk. The images below show some of the paintings and students at the Artwalk:



Some
evalua
tions I
have

made to my beliefs and values about experimentation and delayed meaning in artmaking are that experimentation with media helped students feel more familiar with it before unit project. Now, every unit involves time during the first day for experimentation with the media. Then, I move into working with students on technique, which eased my fears about students missing out on technical skills. My beliefs and values regarding delayed meaning changed as I saw this way of working actually boosted engagement because students were eager to think about a broad topic and work with materials. My teaching practice now involves planning questions to guide students to make meaning during the studio process and is evidenced in student responses during critique and in end of unit reflection. A student from focus group B's response to recent end of unit reflections on place shows how meaning making is delayed until the piece is made:

Comment [SW4]: This is a good idea if it is a media that is unfamiliar to the students.

Section 2: Lesson and Unit Plan Development

Because the addition of experimentation into the Art I painting unit was successful, I used this as a jumping off point for planning focus group B's painting unit a year later in the Art II course. The Artmaking Process course introduced three new key ways to approach unit planning- inclusion of big ideas, incorporation of contemporary artists, and meaningful connections to the world.

One specific area of change occurred in week one of the Artmaking Process course where I noted a project that did not involve discovery in my post, which involved making realistic sculptures of food. In the post I said, "By having students interact with the food and/or even use real food in the final sculpture would have promoted a spirit of purposeful play." The lack of play in the sculpture unit changed the way I approached planning of the painting unit to not only incorporate purposeful play, but to also be more open to big ideas, contemporary artists, and ways to make meaningful personal connections.

I abandoned the practice of starting the unit with a formal introduction of the medium and technical painting skills and instead began the unit with an inquiry based conversation about the purpose of food where I could only ask questions and the students drove the conversation. The lively discussions led personal, cultural, racial, communal, and traditional topics about food and ultimately concluded with an agreement that food exists to nourish, to comfort, and to gather. Students then determined that as part of our experimentation with the big idea of consumption, they would be exploring the purposes of food in the form of painting.

In this unit, I also continued with the practice of using a contemporary artist to drive students towards the big idea as opposed to using their work to emulate.

Comment [SW5]: I'm happy to know that you are sensitive to the role of play in artmaking as a meaningful conceptual strategy, not simply a way to make artmaking more entertaining.

Comment [SW6]: This sounds great! A much better teaching practice than beginning with the media.

Students were enthralled by the work of regional artist, Denise Stewart Sanabria, whose hyperrealistic donut paintings were done through close examination of a box of actual Krispy Kremes. Sanabria's experimentation and playfulness in her artwork embodies what Dr. Walker discusses on page 137 of *Teaching Meaning in Artmaking* where she says, "Play involves experimenting, pretending, and trespassing boundaries, but seems always to be conducted in an atmosphere of great seriousness." My aim was that by presenting Sanabria's work along with her way of working and her concept of consumption, students in focus group B would develop their own sensibilities about working with actual food in the artroom. The vision for this unit developed from *Teaching Meaning in Artmaking* Chapter One where I conclude that as an art educator, I am responsible for making clear the difference between subject matter and big ideas by asking "What is the artist's work about?" during unit planning (Walker, p.3). The connection between preparing food for a potluck, interacting with it in a non-traditional space, and recreating it in the form of a painting helped student's make meaningful connections not only with Sanabria's process, but also with the idea that food is something we all consume for the purposes of nourishment, of comfort, and as a means for gathering together. The student's from focus group B's food paintings created during the Art II course is shown here along with the unit plan and observation notes:

Comment [SW7]: Focusing on the artist's process is as important as focusing on the work itself.



Art 2
Big Idea: Consumption
Sub topic: Visual Inquiry, Kather, Painting

Rationale:

This unit is important because it will teach students to paint from life. Students will have the interactive experience of making their own foods related to the concepts of nourishment, indulgence, and gathering. Students will also be investigating how although food is often seen as the cause of obesity in America, food is also a great source of joy in many cultures and traditions. Students will continue to work on the technical skills of painting, especially blending and texturing techniques.

1. Understanding By Design Template

Stage 1 - Identify Desired Results

Established Goals:

Advanced, Intermediate, Beginner- all students will paint food items, but complexity of assignments will be based on the type of food chosen (apple vs. 3D chicken for example)

Essential Questions:

Art:

Big Idea:

What function(s) does food have? How is food a part of culture? Describe the process of preparing for a family gathering? Why is food important? How does the situation change depending on the function of food? Why is food an important part of culture? How does food affect culture/how does culture affect food?

Essential Understandings:

Art:

Big Idea:

1. Food is central to many cultures. 2. Food has three main functions: its nourishment, its social indulgence, and as a way to gather people together. 3. Foods fall within these categories depending on presentation, setting, and situation. 4. Food can have a variety of meanings depending on culture.

Key Knowledge and Skills

Students will know...

Review knowledge: emphasis
Review skill: scale/overlapping
Review skill: composition
Knowledge/skill: perspective
Skill: pattern
Skill: texture
Skill: painting techniques
Skill: color blending
Content: gathering food resources, drawing from life
Content: realism in painting
Wayne Thiebaud
Denise Stewart Sacabria

Students will be able to...

I can use one of the five types of emphasis to draw the viewer's eye to the area I think is most important.
I can use scale and overlapping in a composition to create depth and work with the point of emphasis to make the viewer look at my work longer.
I can choose a perspective that works with the food and use painting techniques to blend realistic colors and create texture in the work given the food images/resources.
I can incorporate a pattern into the work that is subtle, but adds interest to the work.
I can compare the work of Wayne Thiebaud to Denise Stewart Sacabria and other art involving food.

Observation Report Template

Announced ☒ Unannounced ☐

Date 10/29/12 Time 12:45

Observation Number 1

Reinforcement Objective: TCK Teacher Content Knowledge

Teacher plans focused on technical skills based on last quarter's assessments and even Art 1. The previous year, the teacher "wanted to have student work reflect the level of effort" so she focused on the technical skills necessary to work with acrylic paints - blending colors, spectrum of shades. Ms. Mims Knowledge? Content allows her to "break down" the steps.

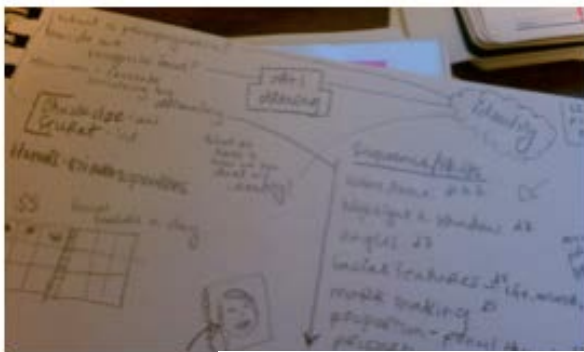
Refinement Objective: QU - questioning

Continue to think about how to

In terms of lesson and unit development in relationship the Artmaking Process course, the areas of challenge have been how long to explore a particular big idea.

Another challenge is the level of planning involved in designing a unit that is rooted in a big idea or sub topic, has strong essential questions, and applicable art understandings, that involves a contemporary artist whose process is documented, and involves student artmaking that is meaningful, experimental, and still high quality. Despite the challenge unit planning presents, it becomes a work of art in and of itself as a result of the components the Artmaking Process and *Teaching Meaning in Artmaking* have inspired me to implement. I am excited to share my informal process unit planning as well as the stage one plans of my Understanding by Design units:

Comment [SW8]: It takes a lot of planning to create an effective unit, but once you have it, you can use it again or perhaps adapt it to make it different.



Curriculum Unit	
This document contains: (1) The completed Understanding By Design template for this Unit, (2) Lesson plans (3) Assessment Package	
<p>High School Visual Arts</p> <p>Art II</p> <p>Medium: Drawing, scientific sketches</p> <p>Big Idea: Time & Transformation</p> <p>Sub-Topic: Identity</p> <p>Title: zoo adaptations</p> <p>Rationale:</p> <p>Students will be using technical drawing skills to create a hybrid animal. The project will lead into a larger study of time and transformation. By using adaptation to test the exploration, students can build on their understanding of something they already know by applying drawing skills and ideas.</p>	
1. Understanding By Design Template	
Stage 1 - Identify Desired Results	
<p>Established Goals:</p> <p>I can apply value, light and shadow by using additive/subtractive techniques to an expressive/scientific drawing of a hybrid animal in the drawing media of my choice.</p> <p>I can create artwork that reveals the aspects of our humanity so that the work will be portfolio or show ready.</p> <p>Essential Questions:</p> <p>How do animals change over time?</p> <p>What causes these changes?</p> <p>Why do animals change?</p> <p>Why are animals used in art so often?</p> <p>Speculate why humans feel a connection with animals.</p> <p>What adaptations would be useful for an animal living in contemporary society.</p> <p>How can I represent an imaginary animal in a realistic and scientific sketch format?</p>	<p>Essential Understandings:</p> <p>Art:</p> <p>Projection is a technique used by art to keep objects in proportion. Layering is used in art to create a for middleground, and background in a makes the art seem less flat and has space. Layering is done using scale. Monochrome is a color scheme base that looks more realistic the more val. Emphasis is the area of a work of art the viewer's eye and artist use five in techniques to create emphasis. Artists use composition to make art interesting to viewers and to keep the work longer (horizon). Renee Magritte's work is considered a which is a type of art that involves or dreams. The content of Shiro Nishida's work</p>
Key Knowledge and Skills	
<p>Students will know...</p> <p>the eye-view/central/chaotic method</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • value • light and shadow • additive/subtractive drawing processes • layering/blend technique • drawing from life using relative proportion, drawing to looking • drawing from photographs using relative scale, identifying areas of light and shadow • composition • additive drawing technique in realistic style and content • sketching in order to show growth from last year's piece in order to show growth from last year's piece • reflect modern drawing practices to the history 	<p>Students will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • draw from life with accurate proportions using the eye-view/central/chaotic method • take photographs of animals • make marks in charcoal, pen, pencil • apply value in charcoal, pen, pencil • apply value in three 2 media through light and shadow still life • technique to create a more realistic and accurate image • drawing from photographs using relative scale, identifying areas of light and shadow • composition • additive drawing technique in realistic style and content • sketching in order to show growth from last year's piece in order to show growth from last year's piece • reflect modern drawing practices to the history

Curriculum Unit	
This document contains: (1) The completed Understanding By Design template for this Unit, (2) Lesson plans (3) Assessment Package	
<p>Art I</p> <p>Big Idea: Identity</p> <p>Sub-Topic: concealing/revealing</p> <p>Rationale:</p> <p>In the concealing/revealing project, students will explore the aspects of their identity personality that they reveal and that they conceal. This concept will build upon the topic from the previous unit about inward/outward appearance. Students will discuss the social function of veils, and will create a self portrait in which they concealed their faces in a way that revealed something more about their identity. Veils here include the literal veil of various face-coverings to the conceptual veils of gender and online personas.</p>	
1. Understanding By Design Template	
Stage 1 - Identify Desired Results	
<p>Established Goals:</p> <p>Advanced: use projection technique to create a full color realistic portrait of self on canvas object/concept: concealing face that reveals more about your identity.</p> <p>Intermediate: use projection technique to create a monochromatic self-portrait that include Write up about object/idea that one hides behind that reveals more about identity.</p> <p>Beginner: use projection technique to create a monochromatic self portrait.</p> <p>Essential Questions:</p> <p>Art:</p> <p>Big Idea:</p> <p>what function do veils serve? What are some literal and not so literal types of veils in modern society? Create an analogy for veils that relates to teenage life... what are things that you hide behind or use to conceal parts of your identity? What might this "veil" say about you?</p>	<p>Essential Understandings:</p> <p>Art:</p> <p>Projection is a technique used by art to keep objects in proportion. Layering is used in art to create a for middleground, and background in a makes the art seem less flat and has space. Layering is done using scale. Monochrome is a color scheme base that looks more realistic the more val. Emphasis is the area of a work of art the viewer's eye and artist use five in techniques to create emphasis. Artists use composition to make art interesting to viewers and to keep the work longer (horizon). Renee Magritte's work is considered a which is a type of art that involves or dreams. The content of Shiro Nishida's work</p>

The evaluations I have made to my teaching practice as a result of the Artmaking Process course in relation to unit and lesson planning is no unit is without big ideas from Art I to Art III and even next year in Art IV. The unit plan on pages 7-10 of *Teaching*

Meaning in Artmaking connects well to the Understanding by **Design** planning my school recently adopted and I found this template as well as the criteria for designing essential questions on page 6 *Teaching Meaning in Artmaking* to have very similar components of essential understandings/big ideas, essential questions, aligned activities, and assessment. Now each in my curriculum unit is founded in a big idea and essential questions whereas before the Artmaking Process course, each unit was instead founded in the elements and **principles**. My unit planning now evolves from the connection between the big idea or subtopic and the medium and always includes a contemporary artist whose artmaking practice I can share with the students. Units typically begin with an inquiry discussion or a spark followed by materials exploration. I will then spend one to two class periods teaching students about technical art skills related to the medium or about applicable elements and principles. Students then dive into a studio atmosphere for the remainder of the course that consists of continued experimentation with the media, one on one meetings to discuss process and ideas, informal peer feedback sessions, more artmaking, continued discussion of ideas, editing, and finally a **critique**.

Comment [SW9]: They are similar

Comment [SW10]: This is a huge change!

The list of big ideas in Chapter One of *Teaching Meaning in Artmaking* is one I have referred back to many times as the art curriculum expands as my school adds grade levels. So far, some of the big ideas I use are Identity, Idealism, Utopias, Materialism Consumption, Place, Transformation as well as related subtopics like self image, home, and time (Walker, 2).

In addition to always including big ideas and contemporary artists in each unit, the Artmaking Process course caused me to evaluate how big ideas should also help

Comment [SW11]: This sounds like a good process with enough structure, but also flexible enough to allow students to explore ideas on their own. It should be adaptable to almost any type of studio experience. Eventually students should be able to internalize this process and use it on their own outside of a school setting.

students relate to their artwork in powerful and meaningful ways. As *Teaching Meaning in Artmaking* states on page 33, “Too often, students’ art-making is superficial because the subject matter or big idea is too removed from their life. Personal concerns should link to big ideas; but conversely, significant ideas and issues should connect to the personal. Meaningful artmaking requires both.” This quote anchors the planning of my Art I curriculum especially because this is the point where students may be having their first opportunity to develop a relationship with art and personal connections to artmaking strengthen that relationship.

Section 3: Teaching Practices

The Artmaking Process course introduced new techniques and concrete teaching material for how to develop personal connections and depth of understanding related to a big idea that expanded upon those in the Issues in Artmaking Course. Some of the new techniques included the word grid in assignment three, the lines of connections exercise in assignment four, and the oppositions in assignment seven. I enjoyed how these new techniques were infused with the visual grid, Serra’s word list, and using Powerpoint as a tool for artmaking from the Issues in Artmaking summer course. In assignment three, I said, “When I was changing the grid to more personal terms for each category, I found myself resisting wanting to dive too deep into personal issues, questions, topics. But, it made me think of the artists in Chapter 2 and how their work was meaningful because it was personal. The artists in chapter two made me think in two ways about making work personal- through the process and through past experiences.” I have included the grid below as a reference. The techniques from

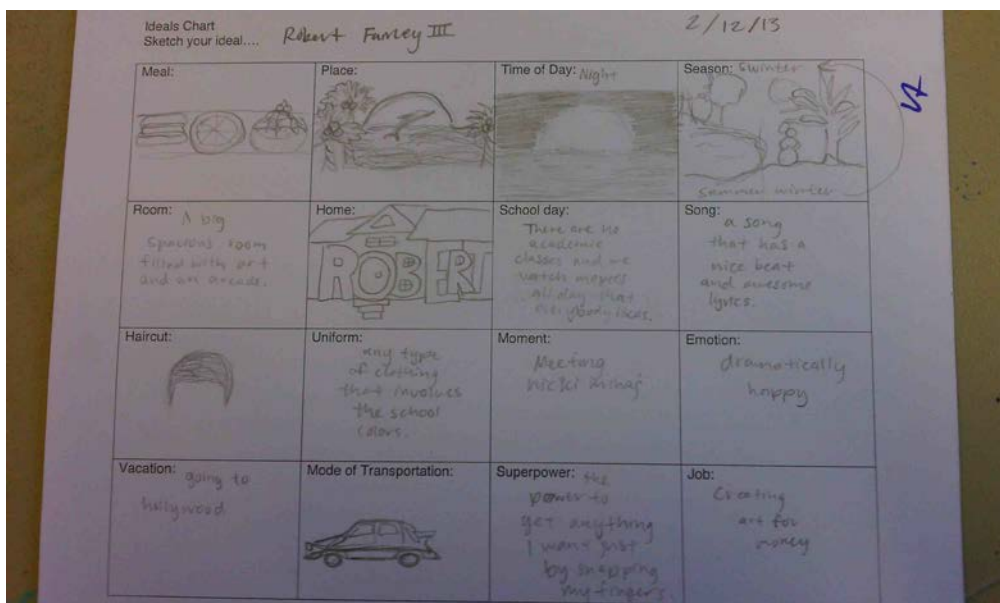
Comment [SW12]: I’m glad you made this connection.

assignment three and others caused me to think in new ways about what big ideas really are and how to use them.

Better	dieging for details	Blank it out	Trophy
A good night's rest	GET OUT OF MY HEAD GET OUT OF MY HEAD GET OUT OF MY HEAD GET OUT OF MY HEAD	Carmen, do this: _____	ZzzzzzzZ
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Best dressed Best look Best style	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, again, 1, 2, 3	\$\$\$\$\$\$
Thank you what a great job you worked really hard we really appreciate you thank you I think you're doing great you've really improved Thank you what a great job you worked really hard we really appreciate you thank you I think you're doing great you've really improved Thank you what a great job you worked really hard we really appreciate you thank you I think you're doing great you've really improved	skinny	Degree Job Husband House Kids	Tired
Me vs Me	Me ____ Me	pressure (undispen)	RunRunRunRun RunRunRunRun RunRunRunRun RunRunRunRun RunRunRunRun

The assignments from the Artmaking Process course caused me to abandon the way I approached introducing big ideas. Instead of just stating the idea at the start of the unit, I adopted the teaching practice of using one or more of these assignments modified for the big idea and level of my students. For example, in a recent unit students created a visual grid of their ideal... place, food, event, moment, season, etc as a framework for the big idea of idealism. This exercise allowed students to begin to grapple with the differences between perfect and ideal. Here is an example I've used with focus group B as well as my current Art I students:

Comment [SW13]: Carmen, I really like this idea. It gets students invested and involved from the very beginning.



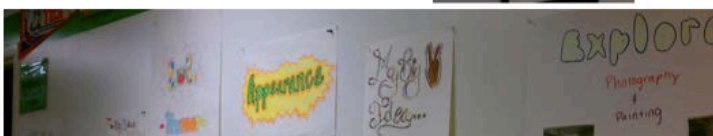
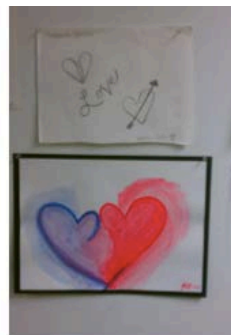
A more drastic change I have made to my teaching practices has been to include a complete set of modified assignments for this course with my Art III students (focus group A). Instead of just asking the students to pick a theme for their quarter three artmaking, I had them list topics related to their big idea, keep an ongoing list of questions about their idea and topic, come up with key concepts in the _____ is about... format, as well as create a visual grid, lines of connection, and selecting a contemporary artist working with a similar concept.

Some problems I encountered with this new teaching technique were that students felt overwhelmed by the assignments being condensed into one packet. Upon reflection, I can see that the way Dr. Walker designed the assignments to be spaced out week to week would have worked better for my students. I also can see from reflecting on assignment seven, the oppositions assignment, that I gained a lot of general and personal clarity on my big idea of idealism. It was emotional and invigorating to review my responses from the oppositions technique where I wrote things like, "This concept of rich/poor and fully/empty got me thinking about a Pottery Barn catalog I recently looked through... (It was) advertising what the ideal American home should look like during the

holidays. It was so overwhelming that I couldn't finish looking at the magazine. My husband and I wondered and discussed if anyone actually had a home with that much stuff. The conclusion we came up with is that yes, of course, some people have homes filled with "things" and this is almost the norm for America consumer culture" and, "I randomly chose still/active (opposition)... For the majority of my life, competitive running has been my main focus... I placed running before almost everything for so long that I've been coming to terms recently with all that I've missed... So now, I'm still, and it is scary to be faced with resetting my ideals." Rereading these quotes made me think about how I can overcome issues I have been having with students not truly understanding their big ideas and/or not making personal connections by spending more time specifically using the technique of oppositions.

Despite these setbacks, the suggestion Sara Arno gave for having students declare their big idea in poster form worked really well. Students brainstormed several ideas using an adapted version of the coursework used in Dr. Walker's Artmaking Process course. The first assignment of the quarter was to visually represent these ideas in poster format in a medium they were interested in exploring. The posters were designed not only as a way to get students to begin to experiment with their medium, but also to commit to a big idea know there would be flexibility with their subtopics as their process developed. The students chose ideas like appearance, love, the color red, exploration, humor, and home and their posters can be seen here:

seen here.



An example of these new teaching techniques that resulted from the Artmaking Process involves the student in focus group A who chose love as her big idea. She struggled for several class periods on how to tackle such a complex subject and skipped ahead to assignment five, researching the work of artist Wayne Thiebaud. A combination of her research and her artist block caused her to begin drawing a series of ice cream cones to get ideas going. When I asked her why she chose to focus on ice cream cones, she told me because she was wanting some ice cream, but was lactose intolerant and could not eat ice cream. After a series of based off the assignment packet and help from her classmates, the student concluded that her relationship to ice cream was very similar to that of other personal relationships in her life and something as simple as paintings of ice cream cones related to her big idea of love. The incorporation of self-selected big ideas into this unit has allowed many of the students in

focus group A to make similar personal connections between their artmaking and their lives.

Several evaluations I have made to my teaching practices as a result of incorporating these assignments not only with focus group A, but with Art I and II students as well has been that these teaching techniques enhance the groundwork I have laid for included big ideas and contemporary artists. I view these assignments as meaning making tools and have seen them ignite student curiosity at the start of units. Without these assignments as teaching techniques, I do not think big ideas would be as exploratory, as deep, and as meaningful.

Comment [SW14]: I agree. It is layering students' experiences with different strategies that builds more depth in their understanding .

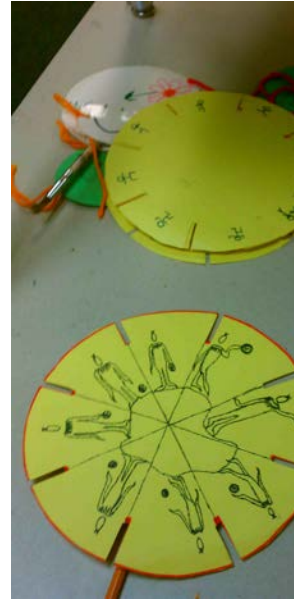
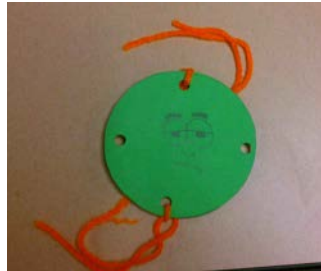
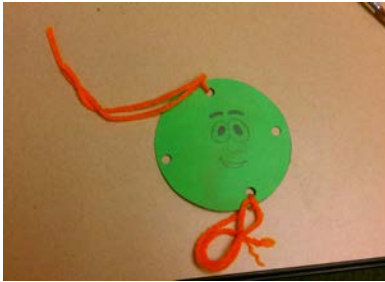
Section 4: Student Work

The Artmaking Process course caused me to think in several new ways about student work most notably how to use experimentation and purposeful play to enhance student work while use limitations to keep the work directed. On page 126 of *Making Meaning in Artmaking*, Dr. Walker discusses the mini-box installation inspired by the work of Sandy Skoglund and says, "Without the pressure to create meaning for the installation until it was complete, students were freer to experiment. However, the project requirements... ensured that there was direction and focus" (Walker, 126). This quote provided a new framework for thinking about student work as inspired, but not copied and experimental, but structured.

I have made several changes with regards to student work as a result of this quote and the Artmaking Process course including built in time for experimentation with various media. One distinct way I built in experimentation was in a unit on stop motion

animation. The students in focus group A not only experimented with mini-stop motions on camera before shooting a longer length film, but also worked with flip books, thaumatropes, and phenakistoscopes to truly experiment with the idea of creating motion from still objects. In addition to experimentation, the very objects for the stop motion- skittles, playdoh, white boards, pipe cleaners, and googley eyes, promoted a sense of purposeful play. Students were serious about manipulating these fun objects to create motion and approached their work in this media purposefully. The result was a level of engagement with the entire process and a commitment to the process before beginning the final stop motions. Images of student thaumatropes and phenakistoscopes is shown here:

Comment [SW15]: Interesting. This reinforces your earlier idea of starting off a big idea by having the students do something rather than presenting the idea more formally.



The Artmaking Process course caused me to abandon the idea that the more choices students have when working, the stronger their work. As a new teacher, I admittedly thought more is better. In the unit on stop motion animation, however, I found that by having students choose a set type of stop motion process- puppetry, white board drawn animation, object based animation, or Claymation, students were faced with limits. Some groups wanted to use two or three types of stop motion in one video, but by limiting student's options after initial exploration, the project was a blend of familiar and directed.

One area in relation to student work that the Artmaking Process course where I have run into problems with is with how to make experimentation authentic. Oftentimes students want to dive right into the final piece without investigating the idea or materials beforehand. I have considered actually having students experiment during the creation

of the final piece for a unit instead of just in a series of mini-exercises before beginning the final piece.

The experimental exercises in stop motion along with the final pieces from this unit provide an example of how focus group A's work was successful due to the blend of purposeful play with clear parameters and limitations. This link shows examples of a range focus group A's work in stop motion during this [unit](#):

<http://www.youtube.com/user/LEADAcademyArt?feature=mhee>

Comment [SW16]: These are fun to watch. I would like to know more about this unit.

The stop motion examples shown here as well as other student created using the Artmaking Process's blended method of experimentation and limitations have caused me to consider my teaching practice in relationship to student work. Instead of being afraid to spend time experiment and engage in purposeful play, I value these components of a unit because they bring about a familiarity with the idea and media that enhance student work. Additionally, by adjusting my teaching to create purposeful limitations in artmaking, I can help students be more directed in their work and ultimately feel more successful.

Section 5: Physical Environment

The Artmaking Process course caused me to think about the physical space of the classroom in new ways related to using art materials, especially given the examples of how Oldenburg, Skoglund, and Haring create artwork. On the topic of risk taking, Dr. Walker writes how Skoglund uses non-traditional artmaking materials like marmalade and bacon to create her artwork.

While the example from Skoglund did not cause me to literally start using food items in the classroom, it did change how I thought about materials. Instead of becoming stressed about orders of particular art supplies, I improvised and started seeking out free supplies to drive experimentation and risk taking. I adopted the habit of going to the Pencil Box as often as they would let me to pick up free office supplies donated by local businesses. All the interior design firms in Nashville partnered up to donate supplies to artists and teachers one weekend last year and before the Artmaking Process course, I do not think I would have been as open to going. I did not always leave these places knowing what I would do with the odds and ends, but that was the challenge in it!

My classroom now is a place where students can access all kinds of materials that promote play, experimentation, and risk taking in their artwork. The addition of a variety of non-traditional art materials has meant a need for more organization. Below you can see images of how non-traditional materials are used and organized within my classroom.





The physical environment of my classroom has changed as a result of the Artmaking Process course and I have been able to reevaluate how we use materials and the units I plan based on supplies. By allowing students to use a broader range of materials within the artmaking process and designing units that allow for experimentation with these materials, I believe I have become a stronger and more resourceful teacher.

Essay One Conclusion:

The Artmaking Process course allowed me to grow as an art educator in five main areas- my personal beliefs as an art educator and artist, lesson and unit planning, teaching practices, student work, and the classroom environment. The course challenged me to be open to the idea of experimentation in my classroom and to incorporate big ideas and contemporary artists into each unit. The assignments Dr. Walker designed in relation to unearthing depth and personal meaning with big ideas have translated into new teaching techniques in my classroom. The text, *Teaching Meaning in Artmaking*, has provided meaningful information not only about unit planning

with big ideas, but also about how to balance purposeful play and risk taking with limitations and requirements to enhance student work. The Artmaking Process course altered the way I think about, look for, plan, and use materials within the physical space of my classroom to encourage exploratory artmaking.

The course started with the quote at the top of the syllabus, “We are meaning-makers, not just image makers” and I can say that resonated not only in my own approach to artmaking, but in how I implement new ideas about using artmaking as a meaning-filled practice into my classroom and about how I design units so my students make stronger connections to the world.

Works Cited:

Walker, Sydney. "Teaching Meaning in Artmaking." *An Education in Practice Series*.

Worcester, Massachusetts: Davis Publications, Inc, 2001. Print.

Addendum 1:

Explanation of Focus Groups:

Focus Group A is refers to the students currently in Art III as of spring semester 2013. I have been fortunate to have taught this group of eight students since the 2010-2011 school year when they were in Art I through next school year when they will be in Art IV. I have chosen this particular group because they have will experienced my teaching before, during, and after completing the Masters in Art Education at The Ohio State University. When I refer to focus group A, I will be referring to this group of students, which consists of all juniors, five male and three female, seven African American students and one Hispanic student, one student with a hearing disability, and all students qualifying for Title I support.

Focus group B refers to the students currently in Art II as of spring semester 2013. When I began implementing many strategies from both the Issues in Artmaking and The Artmaking Process course, it was in this group's Art I course during the 2011-2012 school year. Because I am the only art teacher at my school, these students, like the focus group A students, take the next level of art with me. Focus group B holds a special place in my heart because so much of my work with Big Ideas has proven successful with them. When I refer to focus group B, I will be referring to students within the group of 26 current Art II students. This group is composed of all sophomores, fifteen female and eleven male, twenty four students are African American, one is Hispanic and the other Caucasian, all but two students and all students qualifying for Title I support, and three students have IEPs.

Carmen Mims Noel

Dr. Jennifer Eisenhauer

OSU Art Education 7200

21 April 2013

Reflective Practice Essay #2 on OSU Art Education 607 Course Designing Meaningful
Art Curriculum

Essay Two Introduction

When I applied to graduate school for Art Education, I was seeking direction for the art program at my school. Two years earlier I had been granted the tremendous opportunity of designing, starting, implementing, teaching, and crafting a 5th-12th grade art curriculum for one of the first charter schools in middle Tennessee. The Designing a Meaningful Art Curriculum course by Dr. Eisenhauer provided me the knowledge and tools to make the most of this opportunity. The structure of the course in a clearly sequenced framework allowed me to learn the new information on curriculum in a way that made sense and was applicable. The course began with goal setting and a discussion of issues that were relevant to each student. The readings and discussions in the following weeks provided me with new perspectives on curriculum as well as ways select artists and artwork for units using big ideas. The course gradually became more application based with examples of units planning using big ideas, contemporary artists, and visual culture. The course's design to include a scaffolded approach to unit design by choosing artists, peer reviewing, and then creating own unit proposal was pivotal in helping me apply the course learning as a whole. The Designing a Meaningful Art Curriculum impacted my beliefs about how an Art I curriculum should be designed, it altered my approach to unit planning, influenced me to confront my hidden curriculum,

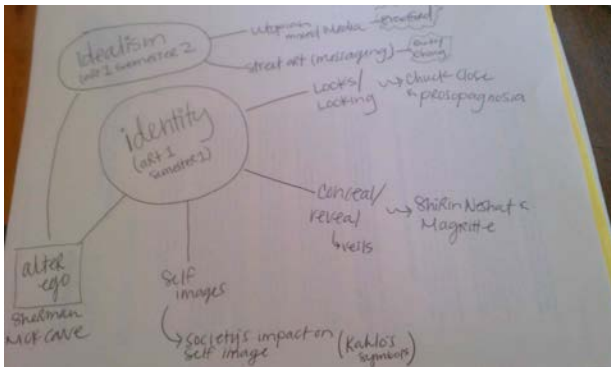
showed me how to practically plan with big ideas, and dared me to use visual culture in ways that enhanced the physical environment of my classroom.

Section 1: Beliefs & Values

The 607 Designing Meaningful Art Curriculum course taught by Dr. Jennifer Eisenhower has had a tremendous impact on my beliefs and values as an art teacher and especially as the only art teacher my student's would have during their high school careers. Olivia Gude's text *Investigating the Culture of Curriculum* introduced me to the idea that curriculum should be planned as though this is student's last art class and not a series of art projects. The text and subsequent discussions led me to think about my Art I class especially and ask myself the same question Gude asks, "What is foundational today?" (Gude, 2). This question caused me to change my beliefs and values about how students should experience art at LEAD Academy and about whether or not what I was teaching was truly foundational. Gude suggests, "the closest thing to a foundational (or at least organizational) principle for contemporary education is the theme of investigation. Create curriculum that encourages students to investigate questions relating to visual or social phenomena" (Gude, 2). This suggestion changed my beliefs about what should be included in the curriculum (at the time just Art I and II) and pushed me towards new practices that would cause student's to think and investigate contemporary culture.

The suggestions made by Gude and related changes I made towards my beliefs and values caused me to adopt and abandon certain practices. The first step, which Gude made very clear in *Investigating the Culture of Curriculum*, was to stop using sites

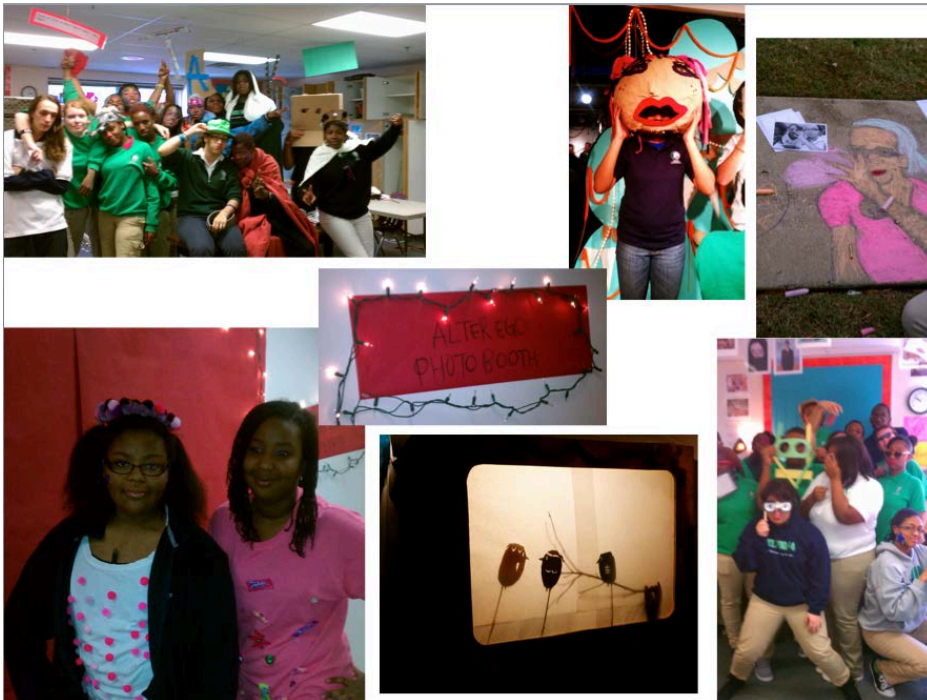
like incredibleart.com to string together “cool” project ideas. As a new teacher, I relied on sites like this, especially when planning for multiple preps. I consistently found the projects led to a very homogenous set of end products and worst of all little to no true thinking during the process. The discussions from week two of the 607 course along with inspiration from Dr. Walker’s courses caused me to adopt the consistent practice of planning units with big ideas first. When Gude said investigation was at the heart of what was foundational if this was, indeed, the last art course students might take, I brainstormed a set of Big Ideas that would cause students to engage with their artmaking at such a deep level that the course could provide the tools and experiences for to have a lifelong relationship with art. The images here show how I considered big ideas and sub topics for the Art I course:

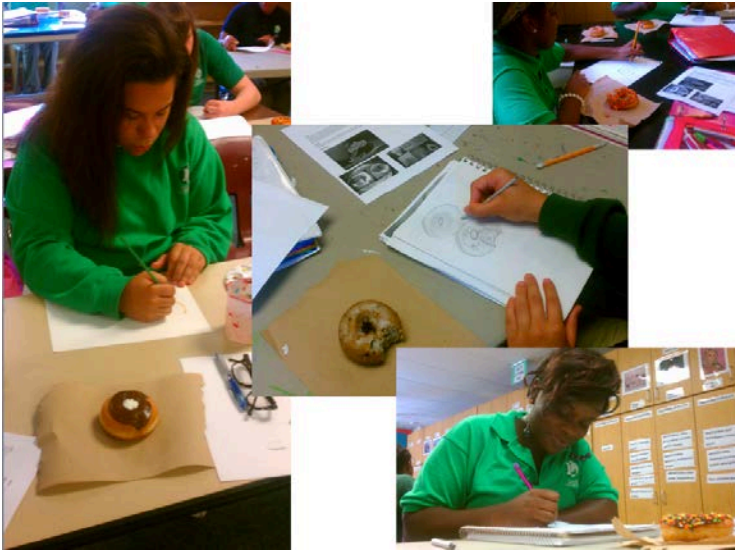


Despite my excitement and initial brainstorming of big ideas, I still ran into problems and difficulties when I started to put more value on big ideas. The main area of difficulty was (and still is) that unit planning took longer. Each unit I was planning was centered on a big idea, sub topic, aligned project ideas, contemporary and traditional artists related to the big idea or media, along with necessary skills and techniques. To keep alignment with Gude’s suggestion of investigation, I routinely plan a “spark” day to

peak student's interest in the big idea, which consists of videos, articles, art analysis, inquiry based discussion, or concept mapping. All of these ingredients I have found are necessary for a successful investigative unit that I can proudly say should be part of an art course if it was a student's last experience with art. All of these ingredients, however, made planning much longer than simply going to incredibleart.com, but the increase in student's engagement and interest in the course has made this kind of planning worth it.

The images shown here document the level of engagement of students mostly at the Art I level in various units including alter egos, Cindy Sherman photo booth, TASK party, consumption food paintings, street art self portraits, and a collaborative project on storytelling called *Deliciously Happy* with artist Lindsey Bailey:





The 607 course changed my perspective on what the focus should be for each high school art course, especially the Art I course, because like Gude says, this could be the last art class students will ever take (Gude, 2). The overall motto I have for the Art I course is now- *fun and for everyone* meaning that I want students to engage with art in a way that is fun, but also challenging and that every student will leave the course in May having connected with at least one of the projects in a way that is meaningful and lasting. The evaluations I have made to my teaching as a result of this change in perspective have been that by treating the course like it could be a student's last art course, I have more students signing up for Art III! I am currently working on mottos for the Art II, III, and IV classes that infuse the qualities of investigation, while deepening student's technical skills and mastery.

Section 2: Lesson Plan & Unit Development

In addition to altering my beliefs and values about curriculum, Dr. Eisenhower's course in Designing a Meaningful Art Curriculum also introduced me to the idea of flexibility in lesson and unit planning. Before beginning the Masters in Art Education at Ohio State University, my main understanding of lesson and unit planning was from my experiences as a Teach for America corps member. While the rigid and structured templates worked well for my core subject colleagues, I constantly struggled with how to make them work for my art courses. The 607 class and the texts by Olivia Gude *Rubric for a Quality Art Curriculum* and Gail McCutcheon *Curriculum and the Work of Teachers* allowed me to think in new ways about how being flexible in unit and lesson planning was not a mark incompleteness, but a move of a confident, attentive, and knowledgeable art educator. The *Rubric for a Quality Art Curriculum* concludes by stating, "A quality art curriculum is organic: it evolves over time" and is preceded by the various ways a curriculum must be flexible- to account for interests of the students, interests of the teacher, the varying rates of development of students, and constant changes in visual culture (Gude, 3).

The deliberationist view of curriculum introduced in the text by Gail McCutcheon, *Curriculum and the Work of Teachers*, changed the way I approached lesson and unit planning. McCutcheon describes this perspective on curriculum design as, "the quest for as ideal a curriculum as possible for *these* students in *this* location" where teachers utilize action research to analyze data in their classrooms as they teach (McCutcheon, 194). While this approach to curriculum is daunting, it showed me that a more effective curriculum exists as a living and breathing document and helped me stop obsessing

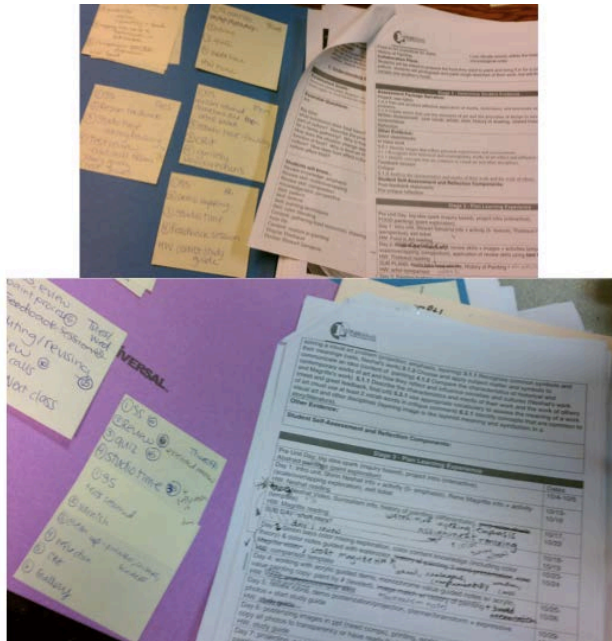
over an excel chart of 5th-12th art projects I had been working feverously on that semester.

In fact, I chose to abandon the bulky excel document all together and stopped trying to make projects “fit” just to submit and document. It was refreshing to instead turn my focus to higher quality units in hybrid format between template provided in the Designing a Meaningful Art Curriculum class and my school’s Understanding by Design (UbD) format. The format of the unit plan, which is driven by essential questions and essential understandings allowed for a less rigid approach to the unit and fit well with McCutcheon’s point of view that, “Teaching is fluid, dynamic, and requires instant decisions and practical problem-solving and judgment” (McCutcheon, 196). Although I found the template provided in the 607 course and the UbD style to be refreshing, I still needed a concrete example of how to balance structure with the fluidity of the deliberationist view. That much needed example came in one of my favorite texts of the course, *The Head Game\$: Engaging Popular Vi\$ual ©ulture* by David Darts. In this text on pages 102-107, the author describes in detail a unit plan that included the structures I needed as a teacher- discussion, contemporary artists, unit questions, a specific media, and sequencing with clear and direct ways he allowed for fluidity. For example, Darts writes, “Though many of the students chose to explore different social issues, they agreed to focus their projects around the question: ‘Where does the influence of popular visual culture stop, and where do I start?’ This question was specific to our earlier investigations in class but was also broad enough to allow students to choose social issues they were personally interested and/or invested in” (Darts, 104). This example was so key for me because it revealed the necessity of the structures of the

“earlier investigations” to allow students, not himself, to write the unifying question driving each individual’s ideas on social issues and his/her artwork within the same medium.

Despite the new found clarity on the marriage of structure and flexibility in planning from week four of the 607 course and the text of David Darts, I still struggled to infuse this hybrid into my own planning for each unit for each prep. Unit planning is still a bittersweet experience for me because I constantly strive to have routines as Gude says in *The Rubric for a Quality Art Curriculum*, “The students should be able to sense, examine, and explain the structure of the curriculum” married with fluidity since, “A flexible curriculum should not inhibit individual teachers from exploring individual conceptual, aesthetic, or technical interests” (Gude, 2). As stated in section one, unit planning takes me a long time! The Designing a Meaningful Art Curriculum course has taught me to approach unit planning like a game of cards- strategically, thoughtfully, with multiple perspectives, avoiding impulsive moves, and having a plan for unexpected moves (or in the case of teaching, unexpected learning).

Some examples of how I approach unit planning include primary source images of my units neatly typed out, taught, reconsidered, and rearranged:



In my unit plans, I have found it worthwhile to plan for variations amongst student work to not only provide students with options, but to create the structure of flexibility within the studio work time. Here are some examples of those options planned for per unit.

Beginner: mosaic style mixed media collage of pre-set landscape design (mountain scene, ocean scene, or skyline) that incorporates a variety of resources and textures. Work will need to incorporate a color scheme that portrays a mood.
For students who want to create a strong work of art while focusing on technical skills.

Intermediate: mosaic style mixed media collage featuring a utopian landscape composition that is harmonious and balanced and includes value ranges of color that work with light source. Textures, color scheme, and principles of composition will need to be present in the work along with depth.
For students who want the challenge of working with big idea of utopia and can translate that idea into a representational mosaic style collage. For students who like to problem solve!

Honors: honors students will be working in groups to discuss the concept of a utopian place and create an original design. Students will then translate that design into a large format mixed media composition that is harmonious and balanced and includes value ranges of color that work with light source. Textures, color scheme, and principles of composition will need to be present in the work along with depth.
For students who want to engage in discussion, collaborate, and take on the challenge of working in a larger format

Levels:

Advanced: use projection technique to create a full color realistic portrait of self on canvas with object/concept concealing face that reveals more about your identity.

Intermediate: use projection technique to create a monochromatic self-portrait that includes layering. Write up about object/idea that one hides behind that reveals more about identity.

Beginner: use projection technique to create a monochromatic self portrait.

Planning units with increased flexibility and student choice, but that are still routine and structured have proven to be successful and I have included examples from a recent unit on installation art which epitomizes this balance. Planning, teaching, and guiding this unit that proved how allowing students to work within the structure of installation art, while allow them to make decisions and choices about their space could create meaningful experiences beyond just the art room. The nature of installation art also instilled in students the necessity of a balance between planning and flexibility in the artmaking process. Students had to make clear site sketches and plans, while also being flexible to material limitations and site changes along the way.



The Designing a Meaningful Art Curriculum has caused me to make several evaluations to my teaching practice with regards to lesson and unit planning. The first is that teaching art, like making art, requires a delicate balance of structured planning and flexibility and fluidity. Achieving this balance has become a work of art in and of itself and as McCutcheon describes, “Abandon(s) a starry-eyed, romantic love of teaching and progress(es) to seeing teaching as challenging, difficult, enjoyable work where problems exist that are murky but can be resolved” (McCutcheon, 196). It is with this mindset that I now approach unit planning- it is challenging and necessary to plan balanced units, but it is “okay” and also necessary that it be evaluated and changed along the way!

Section 3: Teaching Practices

By the 2012 spring semester, I had already made several additions to my teaching practice including using big ideas to drive student’s artmaking experiences.

The Designing a Meaningful Art Curriculum reinforced the big ideas, but through the lens of a contemporary artist and his/her process. During Dr. Eisenhower's course, we first examined the work of Do Ho Suh and Pepon Osorio whose work both deals with the concept of home, but in very different ways. In week three's reflection, I said, "Do Ho Suh's work makes me think about the ability to find home within oneself amongst the collective. Osorio's work is the opposite, it makes me think about how in order to have home and memories, we must have culture and one another. One artist's view of home is more personal and introspective, while the other's is more interpersonal and cultural." This kind of reflection is both accurate and personal, which is the kind of addition I wanted in my curriculum. The Designing a Meaningful Art Curriculum course also introduced to me the concept of a hidden curriculum through the writings of both Olivia Gude in *Investigating the Culture of Curriculum* and in Gail McCutcheon's piece *Curriculum and the Work of Teachers*. Both authors caused me to consider, for the first time, the unspoken lessons of my curriculum that I was teaching by leaving out and avoiding more traditional artists.

What changed as a result of the 607 course and being introduced to this idea of a hidden curriculum was that I stopped avoiding my weakness of art history in my teaching practice and instead embraced challenge of including both contemporary and traditional artist in each unit. I struggled through both Art History Survey courses required for a Studio Art major at Vanderbilt. Art history is something I would love to be interested in naturally, but unfortunately, it is something I have to work to understand and remember. Thankfully, I can at least acknowledge that art history is my weak point and realized that by avoiding traditional and historical artists, I was inadvertently telling

my students, “that old stuff doesn’t matter” and “as artists we don’t need art history” neither of which I believe and would certainly never want to teach to my students.

I realized very quickly that it was going to be difficult to overcome my hidden curriculum by becoming an art history expert so I started by adopting the practice of including one traditional artist for every contemporary artist I would teach and spend time comparing the two. In doing this, I also adopted the practice of not only teaching students the basics about each artist, but also seeking out an interesting or relevant fact to connect even the most historical artist to student’s lives. For example, in the unit on concealing and revealing identities, we look at both Shirin Neshat’s work as well as Rene Magritte’s work. Students identify immediately with Neshat because I am able to find a video of her speaking at a TED talk and they can get to know her as a person through that format. While student’s are typically curious about Magritte’s work, I wanted to include that same kind of personal information they had with Neshat. In doing research on Magritte through the site theartstory.com, it was interesting to know that the reason he so often concealed his subject’s face in his painting was because as a child he found his mother drown in a creek with part of her dress covering her face. While disturbing, this fact was memorable to students because they experienced sympathy for Magritte much like they felt a personal connection with Neshat after watching the video.

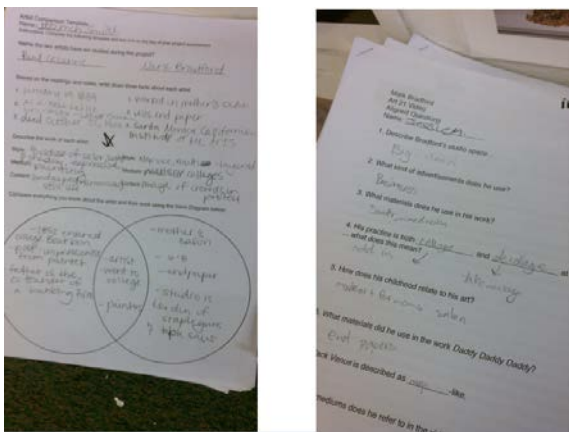
The challenge of including two artists per unit per prep proved to me that it takes a long time to research each artist to truly understand his/her work. The Art 21 Series Dr. Eisenhower included in the Designing a Meaningful Art Curriculum course immediately helped me to understand and identify important points about contemporary

artists I was including. The depth of understanding this series provided actually helped facilitate the process of finding and researching a traditional artist that would work well in the unit as a comparison. For example, the Art 21 video on Mark Bradford went beyond his work as a large scale mixed media artist, but explained how his work deals with his surroundings. In the video Bradford talks about the signs left behind from the riots that he uses in his work, but he also talks about how the work *Black Venus* is map-like and is based off another area of Los Angeles (Sollins, "Paradox"). These connections on Bradford's artmaking process and the meaning made from it led me to seek out a traditional artist who also used his/her surroundings to heavily influence his work and that thinking led me to Paul Cezanne, who painted the view from his studio window of Mount Sainte Victorie over sixty times (qtd. In Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco).

Despite incredible primary source material like Art 21 and TED talks, it was still too easy to misunderstand artist or artwork, especially when trying to add so many artists (two per unit per prep). This challenge was highlighted in week eight of the Designing a Meaningful Art Curriculum class when a classmate peer reviewed my proposed artists for my unit. I chose to juxtapose Sarah Sze's *Highline Project* with Tyree Guyton's *Heidelberg Project*. Initially my proposal was based on the idea of compassion, however, the insight my peer reviewer gave on Guyton's work changed my thinking. She said, "However, most Detroiters have a love/hate relationship with the Heidelberg Project. It is somewhere between obscenely grotesque and uniquely beautiful. Initially, when Guyton began to create the project he was condemned by the city. His art was seen a form of political protest because of the lack of involvement from

the city of Detroit to help improve the quality of life for people who lived in the neighborhood of Detroit.” This information not only helped me to better understand the Heidelberg Project, but also forced me to truly look at my big idea, the meaning I saw seeking to find in a second artist, and ultimately led me to Patrick Dougherty, whose work, like Sze’s, I personally interacted with and therefore became more invested in learning about.

An example of how I have infused both contemporary and traditional artists into my curriculum is shown here in an Art 21 aligned worksheet constructed to help student’s better understand Bradford’s artmaking along with student work comparing Bradford to Cezanne:



The following table shows which artists I am including in my teaching practice in

Art I specifically:

Art I		
Looks/Looking	Chuck Close	Seurt
Concealing/Revealing	Shirin	Rene

	Neshat	Magritte
Self Image	Duane Hanson	Frida Kahlo
Telling a story	Cindy Sherman	Dorothea Lange
Places/Things Around Us	Bradford	Cezanne
Meaning & Message	Banksy	Candy Chang

The evaluations I have made to my teaching practice as a result of Dr. Eisenhower's 607 course include embracing sources that reveal contemporary artists' artmaking process not only because it connects students with the artist's on a personal level, but these sources can also reveal important information in the planning stages that can lead to a broader range of traditional artists that would also work within that unit. Overcoming the subliminal messages in my hidden curriculum has meant starting with my interest in contemporary artists, deepening my understanding using sources like Art 21, and then challenging myself to become more of an expert on historical artists that will enhance and broaden my curriculum.

Section 4: Student Work

The Designing a Meaningful Art Curriculum course reiterated ideas about student work from Dr. Walker's Artmaking Process course in a way that was concrete from a unit planning perspective. The unit plan template that Dr. Eisenhower provided in the

course outlined clearly how to plan for student work to be personal in the Key Concepts, Rationale, and Personal Connections sections of the template. In addition, the 607 course provided examples and allowed time for planning using big ideas help make artwork personal and relevant for students. The structure of the later part of the course provided an opportunity to see examples of how classmates were planning for meaningful and relevant student work using big ideas in the OSU unit planning template.

Seeing distinct examples of how to plan for engaging student work during the Designing a Meaningful Art Curriculum course changed how I was using big ideas. It was helpful to see distinctly the sequence of a unit from personal connections to knowledge base to artistic knowledge building to artmaking to conclusions. Before the course, I was incorporating big ideas, but not overtly enough for my students to all pick up on them. It was really more of like a thematic approach, but the examples provided by Dr. Eisenhower as well as the examples from my peers helped to plan for the personal connection days where the big idea or subtopic is revealed. This more overt approach to introducing big ideas led to student work that was more thoughtful, that students were more excited to discuss, and student work that was, on the whole, more varied. For example, in a unit on mixed media utopias before the 607 course, student work was mostly of beaches and tropical places because we did not spend time discussing the differences between perfect places and ideal, utopian places. This year, however, we spent a whole day making personal connections between both perfect and utopian places and concretely identifying what makes something truly a utopia. As a result, the projects from this year were much more broad and students were truly able to

articulate both verbally and in a unit reflection what their mixed media depicted and why it was a utopia. Here are examples from that project:



Some old practices I abandoned as a result of the Designing a Meaningful Art Curriculum course included forcing a big idea or repeating the same big idea. Students became board with working with identity on multiple projects and I realized it was because I was not being clear with the subtopics. Adopting the practice of writing key questions and key concepts helped me to define clearly for myself and my students what ideas we were addressing and how those ideas were both similar and different to previous unit ideas. Spending more time generating stronger, more aligned unit questions, led to more focused student engagement in their artmaking and less repetition of the same ideas. For example, this year students in Art I worked with the

concept of Identity three times, but each time the subtopic was presented with new and distinct unit questions. This helped students to vary their ideas and explore the overall concept of identity more thoroughly and deeply. Here are examples of the unit questions related to the subtopics for each of the Art I units on identity:

Essential Questions: how do you pick out a person in a crowd? How do you think people recognize you? Describe one of your facial features in <u>depth</u> ... Which facial feature makes you truly unique? How do you think others view your look? how can you draw using dots? How can I show pride in my work?	Essential Understandings: 1. <u>individuals</u> are identified by their looks 2. <u>each</u> facial feature creates a look that combines to be identified by others and is one of a kind 3. <u>people</u> may favor one feature over another because of the look and/or because of the function 4. <u>the way</u> you view your looks can be different from the way others view you 5. <u>images</u> are broken down into pixels.
Essential Questions: Art: Big Idea: what function do veils serve? What are some literal and not so literal types of veils in modern society? Create an analogy for veils that relates to teenage life... what are things that you hide behind or use to conceal parts of your identity? What might this "veil" say about you?	Big Idea 1. <u>veils</u> in modern society have many meanings. 2. <u>reveal</u> means to openly share and conceal means to keep hidden 3. <u>there</u> are aspects of our personality that we reveal and that we conceal 4. <u>something</u> used to conceal can also reveal something about a person's identity <i>Art and Skills</i>
Is Hanson's work stereotyping? If so, is that okay? What do the symbols in Kahlo's work mean? How have those experiences impacted her? what does self image mean? what are some components of society? which things from this list impact your self image? how do these things impact you?	HoA: Hanson includes realistic details in his work that could be considered stereotypes to drive his use of themes in sculptures. HoA: Kahlo uses symbols to represent life experiences that impact her identity. BI: self image is how we view ourselves and oftentimes how we want others to view us BI: components of society that could impact one's identity or self image <u>include</u> social media, politics, economic status, race, brands, sports, celebrities, Hollywood, fashion, stereotypes, trends, family, friends, etc

I also adopted the practice of starting each unit with meaning making activity like an inquiry discussion, experimentation with media, an interesting reading or video, or an activity similar to the example provided in the 607 unit plan example to spark thinking about a subtopic in a way that is personal and relevant. As I said with the utopian example, by spending time on the front end of a unit allowing students to make true personal connections, student's became heavily invested in explore the concepts in their work as opposed to approaching the work with a basic theme.

Although my units now had a clear starting point, which led to more engaged student work, I still ran into a few problems with this new approach. One minor issues I had was now that student work was more personal, it was harder to critique formally

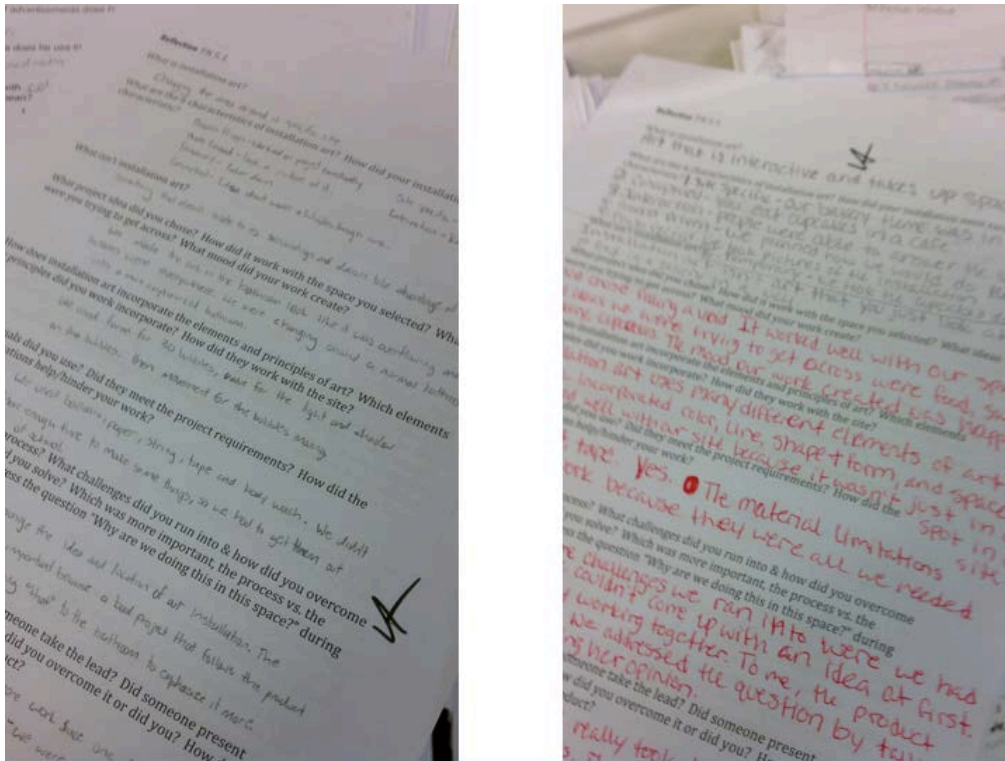
using the Tennessee state standards of describe, interpret, analyze, and judge.

Students oftentimes wanted to spend the majority of the critique on the interpret strand, which left the other strands neglected. This problem was overcome by a planning for a more structured way to do critiques so that all strands of critique were accounted for and that students still had time to share their opinions. Critiques are now based off the categories of the rubric, which ask students to not only interpret the content, but to also describe where technical skills were used as well as analyze and judge both the aesthetic and composition of the artwork. This form of critique takes at least an hour, however, students truly crave the critique process.

Another area of struggle I am still working through with regards to meaningful and engaged student work is how to spend time teaching basic art skills and techniques in a way that does not feel forced and removed from the excitement of the meaning and art making portion of the unit. As with the OSU unit template, we allot the third (and sometimes fourth) lesson of a unit to working on applicable skills. The formative assessments on these days show me that students can apply the skills in a step by step or simple practice activity. However, I find that only about a quarter of students consistently apply all of the skills in the final piece. Most students will apply one or two of the skills, but still some struggle to make the connection between the final unit artmaking time and the skill-building day from early in the unit. One way I have combated this issue is to break down the skills into necessary and additional skills/techniques. I teach the necessary skills/techniques on day three of a unit in the form of practice activities with the expectation that students will apply these skills to their later work. I then teach the extra skills/techniques during the studio time and students

may or may not practice them before applying the skill to a work. For example, in the mixed media unit, I worked with students on creating depth through scale and overlapping on day three of the unit, but waited to explain how warm and cool colors advance and recede on the studio day when most students were starting to add colors. This meant, of course, that some students had to change plans in order to show properties of warm colors advancing in their artwork, however, most professional artists make changes during the process that greatly change and enhance their work so this process should really be no different for student artists. It is difficult to define how this strategy is working because I have just now implemented it after spending time since the Designing a Meaningful Curriculum mostly focused on the student engagement piece of student work.

In addition to the classroom examples of student work in the mixed media piece, it is necessary to also see how students articulate their personal connections to their work in a written way. At the end of each unit, students are asked to write a reflection, which essentially asks them to answer the unit questions. It is in these reflections, that I can see the takeaways from Dr. Eisenhower's course on how to incorporate big ideas in a way that is meaningful to students truly come to life. Here are a few examples of those reflections:

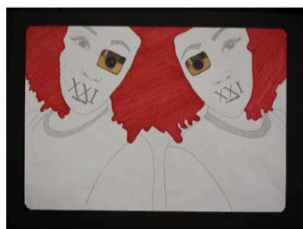


Some evaluations I have made to my teaching practice in terms of student work as a result of the Designing a Meaningful Art Curriculum are that students will put more effort into artwork if invested, which will increase likelihood they will want to implement skills and techniques to make it more visually appealing (as opposed to making something only visually appealing without any personal connection to it). This frame of mind led me to designing the new structure for implementing skill building days and, most importantly, led me to place a greater emphasis on planning for engaged student work through unit questions and key concepts aligned to a clear big idea and sub topic.

Section 5: Physical Environment

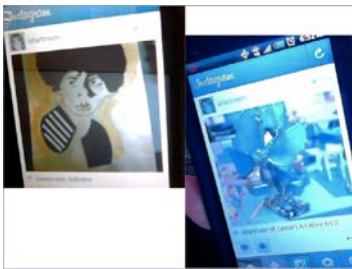
Dr. Eisenhower's Designing a Meaningful Art Curriculum course caused me to think in new ways about the physical environment of my classroom in relation to visual culture. After reading Paul Duncum's *Visual Culture as a Work in Progress* during week four of the 607 course, I started to consider how incorporating visual culture could create a familiar set of images and content that could make art room more welcoming. As Duncum writes, "art educators should not be content with merely deconstructing images but would have their students make images in response to all the issues raised by popular imagery" (Duncum, 8). This early line in the Duncum text made me consider how including ways for students to respond to popular visual culture could make the art room less intimidating. Yes, of course, I would be challenging them with issues such as gender, race, income, culture, and societal pressures, but these are not issues that are new or unfamiliar to my students. Instead of entering into a classroom where every concept is irrelevant and new and then asked to make art about it, visual culture allows students to enter into a physical space where they can feel safe discussing controversial issues, grappling with those issues, and expressing their beliefs and opinions via the artmaking process. The inclusion of visual culture into the curriculum not only meant students were invested and felt safe exploring controversial issues, but the addition of social media became a way to expand classroom environment. Dr. Eisenhower's course caused me to continue to think about how visual culture is a living, breathing, culture and not just a set of magazine images. Once I understood visual culture as alive, I was able to open myself up to the idea that visual culture could broaden the walls of my classroom.

The changes that occurred as a result of the incorporation of visual culture into my classroom was largely influenced by the discussions of Duncum's text *Visual Culture as a Work in Progress* and specifically inspired by the quote, "Art education can never just be about raising questions; it must also be about empowerment" (Duncum, 16). The following example show how visual culture empowered students who would otherwise not have been engaged with a project to lead discussions and use artmaking as a platform for expression. In the unit on concealing and revealing identity, we opened with looking at modern veils. The images the students examined are shown below. Students discussed in small groups and as a full class, what object concealed the face and what that object revealed about the person on a deeper and symbolic level. Then students were asked work backwards and make a list of things about them that others may or may not know. Students listed things like, "I'm a good singer, but I never sing outside of my house" or "I like spending time with my granny" or "I have more to say than people realize." From this list, students then brainstormed objects that related or were symbolic. This exercise set the stage for a project that could have otherwise been intimidating for Art I students- a self portrait on canvas. The twist of having to conceal part of their face to better express themselves and the activities leading up to this process are one way my class was made more welcoming by including visual culture.



Some of the ways I have tried to incorporate visual culture to expand the curriculum beyond the physical space of the classroom have been in terms of social media are through the use of a class facebook page, instagram account, Picassa photosharing, and YouTube. Picassa allowed my students to deepen their study of portraiture by taking, uploading, sharing, and editing their work. The ability to share the

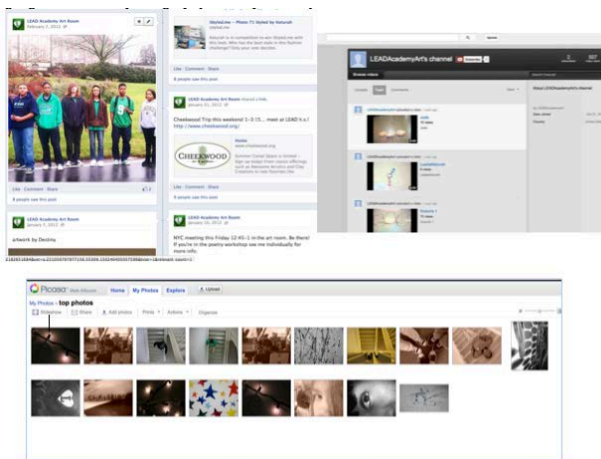
portraits through Picassa and Googledocs made the critique process much stronger than previous critiques. Perhaps the most pivotal use of visual culture was through the process of making stop motion animation. The class analyzed various types of stop motion on the internet and came up with criteria for a good stop motion and for our rubric. The class made several “warm up” mini videos and shared them with our staff. The feedback they received was so much more meaningful than if that teacher had come into the class and sat in the critique. Just seeing the number of hits on their videos proved so powerful because it was a way of feedback that students were familiar with and valued. These additions allowed me to abandon the idea that critique had to be in the round, strict, routine, and formal. The addition of digital critique along with the critique changes I mentioned in section four, have allowed this to become a pivotal part of my curriculum. Below are some images from our student-run instagram account LAHSart-



The problems and difficulties I encountered with the addition of visual culture as a way of enhancing and expanding the physical environment of the art room are that it is difficult to regulate posts during digital critique. Students tend to be more harsh on social media and were less conscious of the fact they were posting about art and not about the artist. Nothing went majorly wrong, but I am still exploring ways to have a more controlled and closed-group setting for class critiques. Along those same lines, I

also struggled with ways to, again, reinforce Tennessee state standards on critique types (describe, interpret, analyze, judge). There is more I can do with the critique posting assignment description to push students to comment using the four different ways of critiquing.

Additional examples of how the Designing a Meaningful Curriculum caused me to think about the physical environment of my classroom include images from our facebook page, our youtube page, as well as how we used picassa and googledocs for the photography units specifically.



The evaluations to my teaching practice I have made as a result of Dr. Eisenhower's course have been that the inclusion of visual culture engages students and allows them to be more familiar with some of the concepts in art room space they may have otherwise. Visual culture also allows for the expansion of the art room into lives of students through social media and reinforces to students the idea that the concepts they seek to express in art are the same as those that exist in their daily lives,

which is in line with the Duncum's conclusion to *Visual Culture as a Work in Progress*, "Instead of seeing school art as separate from student lives, we need to see visual culture as central to all our lives" (Duncum, 17).

Essay Two Conclusion

The Designing a Meaningful Art Curriculum course by Dr. Eisenhauer truly impacted me as an art educator in a number of different and powerful ways. Her class and the text of Olivia Gude instilled in me a belief that I should design and teach the Art I curriculum as though it could be student's last art class. What I found was the more emphasis on making Art I relevant to student's lives, the more engaged students were, and the more students wanted to pursue a higher level art course. On a unit and lesson planning level, the text of Gail McCutcheon and Gude persuaded me to plan for flexibility and changed my viewpoint on planning entire curriculum in one excel document at one time. The 607 course also influenced me to confront the hidden curriculum in my teaching practice and include both contemporary and traditional artists in each unit. The unit planning template Dr. Eisenhauer provided helped me to overtly use big ideas to make student work relevant by starting each unit with a personal connections lesson driven by key questions and concepts. Finally, the text of Paul Duncum encouraged me to incorporate visual culture into my curriculum allow students to feel familiar with concepts being expressed in their artmaking as well as to expand the physical space of classroom using social media. The Designing a Meaningful Art Curriculum course was one of the most influential courses of the Ohio State Art Education Masters Program and has impacted my work as an art educator substantially.

Works Cited:

- Darts, D. (2006). Head Game\$: Engaging Popular Vi\$ual ©ulture. In *Visual Culture in the Art Class: Case Studies*, pp. 99-108.
- Duncum, P. (2006). Introduction: Visual Culture as a Work in Progress. In *Visual Culture in the Art Class: Case Studies*, pp. ix – xvii.
- Gude, O. (2000). "Investigating the culture of curriculum," In *Real-World Readings in Art Education: Things Your Professor Never Told You*, Dennis E. Fehr, Kris Fehr, and Karen Keifer-Boyd (Eds.), New York, NY: Palmer Press.
- Gude, O. (nd). "Rubric for a quality art curriculum. URL: http://www.uic.edu/classes/ad/ad382/sites/AEA/AEA_index.html

- McCutcheon, G. (1988). "Curriculum and the work of teachers," In *The Curriculum*, Landon E. Bayer and Michael Apple (Eds.),. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Murphy, Richard W. *The World of Cézanne 1839–1906*. (Alexandria, Virginia: Time Life Library of Art, 1968). 2013 Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.
<http://deyoung.famsf.org/paul-c-zanne-mont-sainte-victoire>
- "Shirin Neshat: Art in Exile." *TED: Ideas worth Spreading*. N.p., n.d. Web. 29 Mar. 2013. <http://www.ted.com/talks/shirin_neshat_art_in_exile.html>.
- Sollins, Susan (Executive Producer). (2007) *Art: 21-Art in the Twenty-first Century: Season Four*. [DVD] United States: PBS Home Video.
- "The Art Story.org - Your Guide to Modern Art." *Rene Magritte Biography, Art, and Analysis of Works*. N.p., n.d. Web. 29 Mar. 2013.
<http://www.theartstory.org/artist-magritte-rene.htm>

Conclusion

The Masters in Art Education program at The Ohio State University as a whole has been extremely significant in ways that are both personal and professional. Professionally, the program has equipped me with an approach to teaching art that transcends both my classroom and community education teaching. It is this overall approach to artmaking that gives me the confidence to continue pursuing high goals at my current school and to pursue plans for a career in community education. I found the process of writing the essays imperative to revealing how much the courses of the Master's in Art Education program have impacted my mindset, teaching, planning, and

reflection on a daily basis. While the essays here speak to the professional impact of the Master's in Art Education program at The Ohio State University, on a personal level, the set up of the program has allowed me to bond and connect with fellow art educators in a way that I did not think was possible in online education. The conversations had amongst the 2013 class have been meaningful, challenging, and fundamental for my personal development as an art educator. In summary, The Ohio State University's Master's in Art Education program has not only been a valuable and necessary step for me professionally, but a meaningful and lasting experience personally.